

The Examiner's Action on page 5 asserts that the inventions of Groups IV and VI are unrelated because Group IV does not recite a masking layer, while Group VI does.

Applicants assert that the restriction between the inventions of Groups IV and VI as being unrelated is improper for the following reasons. Contrary to the statement in the Examiner's Action, the invention of Group IV, for example, in Claim 20, step (b) recites that the microelectronic workpiece onto which copper is electroplated includes "one or more through-mask openings." Thus, contrary to the statement in the Examiner's Action, Claim 20 does recite a process that relates to plating through a through-mask opening. Since the invention of Group IV and the invention of Group VI relate to through-mask plating processes, the inventions are related and applicants assert that the restriction therebetween is improper and respectfully request its withdrawal.

In view of the above, examination of the invention of Groups IV and VI in the present application is proper and accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the invention of Groups IV and VI be examined in the present application.

In the event the restriction requirement between the inventions of Groups IV and VI is maintained, applicants elect the invention of Group IV.

If the Examiner has any questions regarding the above, the Examiner is requested to call applicant's attorney at the number listed below so that any outstanding issues can be resolved in a timely and efficient manner.

Respectfully submitted,

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